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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2591

December 31, 1992

NEW PLANT APPEALS TO ANIMALS AND HOMEOWNERS -- Red-flowered globemallow may provide a grazing treat for rangeland animals and an attractive ornamental for home gardeners, USDA researchers say. The globemallow can survive in very dry areas, thriving in sunny climates where other forage plants would die, and is a good choice for wildflower seed mixtures. The plant also has attractive brick-red blooms and succulent green leaves and grows up to two feet tall. Globemallows grow wild in the west from Arizona to the Canadian border. They belong to the mallow family, which includes cotton, hollyhocks, hibiscus and marshmallow--the plant whose ground-up roots were originally used in the sugary, spongy confections of the same name. Small quantities of two globemallow species, *Sphaeralcea coccinea* for forage and *S. munroana* for gardeners, are available to nurseries and breeders free of charge. **Contact: Julie Corliss (510) 559-6069.**

STERILIZING MOSQUITOES -- Researchers with USDA's Agricultural Research Service have discovered a hormone that sterilizes female mosquitoes and other blood-sucking insects, such as biting midges, flies and fleas, and offers a possible new way of controlling the pests outdoors. A synthetic chemical mimic of the oostatic hormone, injected into female mosquitoes, inhibited up to 98 percent of their eggs from forming. The hormone can also block the production of enzymes necessary to develop eggs, essentially sterilizing the females. This is an important development for agency scientists who are looking for new ways to control harmful insects without using chemicals. **Contact: Sean Adams (301) 504-9108.**

TRADE SURPLUS UPDATE AND FORECAST -- The agricultural trade surplus jumped nearly \$700 million in October 1992, the largest jump since November 1991, as strong exports outpaced imports. Agricultural exports surged ahead on increased shipments of meat, dairy products, wheat, soybeans, horticultural products and unmanufactured tobacco. U.S. agricultural exports in fiscal 1993 are expected to decline largely due to lower prices for corn and soybeans, and reduced cotton exports. Export value for grains and products, oilseeds and products, and cotton is expected to fall, while horticultural and animal product exports are expected to increase to a new record, but grow at a slower rate than in fiscal 1992. **Contact: Steve MacDonald (202) 219-0822.**

COTTON'S COMEBACK -- In 1991, per capita cotton consumption reached the highest since 1966 and total U.S. consumption of cotton has nearly doubled since 1982. Although U.S. mills have increased their output, the largest percentage increase has come from cotton textile imports, which have risen each year since 1982, with the exception of 1988. The comfort factor combined with lower prices in the 1980's has led to the rebound in cotton use, especially in apparel. **Contact: Bob Skinner (202) 219-0841.**

FOOD POISONING DETECTION TEST -- USDA's Agricultural Research Service licensed a test that accurately confirms the presence of a difficult to identify food-poisoning bacterium. The test uses Congo red dye to detect the bacterium *Yersinia enterocolitica*. This bacterium reaches infectious levels in milk, beef and other meat products within four days during refrigerated storage. Researchers say this bacterium is deceiving because only some strains can be harmful. This test detects the harmful strains and also allows for recovery of the bacterium to verify results. Contact: **Bruce Kinzel (301) 504-8739.**

EQUATION DETERMINES FAT LOSS -- Scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service have developed an equation that when plugged in with blood test results can calculate fat loss from a three-month weight-loss regimen. Scientists are hoping that a fat loss forecast might help dieters set realistic goals and avoid the traps of yo-yo diets and crash diets that aren't nutritionally sound. The equation uses blood test results which measure free fatty acids in the bloodstream, a test which is not new to the dieting scene. The equation, however, is new. Researchers have experimented with a limited number of volunteers in the San Francisco, California area, but soon hope to have dieters at weight loss centers around the country volunteer to test the equation. Contact: **Marcia Wood (510) 559-6070.**

SUGAR PRODUCTION -- World sugar production in 1992/93 is estimated up 415,000 tons from September, but down slightly from the 1991/92 record crop of 116.36 million tons. Global production is forecast to exceed consumption for the fourth straight year in 1992/93. World sugar exports in 1992/93 are forecast slightly higher than last season, and have been declining since the early 1980's. Contact: **Peter Buzzanell (202) 219-0886.**

WORLD COFFEE SITUATION -- World coffee production for 1992/93 is now estimated to fall 7 percent below a year earlier. This would be the smallest crop since 1988/89 and would be well under the record 1987/88 crop. Low world prices, following the suspension of export quotas under the International Coffee Agreement in July 1989, have discouraged new plantings and the utilization of good cultural practices in many producing countries. Most of the drop in production this season is attributed to a small Brazilian crop. However, lower production is also expected in Columbia, India, Africa, and most Central American countries. Indonesia is expected to harvest a larger crop. Contact: **Fred Gray (202) 219-0888.**

LOOK FOR THE CARD -- A postcard will be included with USDA radio's weekly cassette of January 5, 1993. We ask that broadcasters receiving the cassette service look for the postage-paid postcard included in the weekly cassette envelope, fill it out and return it to us. Your prompt response will help us update our mailing list of broadcasters who want to continue receiving the weekly cassette service. Broadcasters not responding to the postcard will no longer receive the cassette service.

Editor: Carol Childers
R-TV Fax: (202) 690-2165
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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1856 -- Brenda Curtis talks with the retiring director of USDA's Human Nutrition Research Service about the changes in nutrition information during Dr. Walter Mertz's forty years at USDA. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1338 -- U.S. strawberries gain popularity; up in smoke; corn crops and food costs; nutrition update; and video/audio clubs. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1847 -- USDA news highlights; strawberry export sales boom; tobacco outlook; a domestic castor oil?; and controlling the wheat aphid. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1601 -- Versatile fungus; telltale fungus; italian beef; beef breeding; and looking for leaner beef. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tuesday, January 12, weekly weather and crop, U.S. crop production report, grain stocks, winter wheat seedlings, world ag supply and demand; Wednesday, January 13, world ag/grain production, world oilseed production, world cotton situation; Thursday, January 14, milk production report; Friday, January 15, livestock and poultry situation, vegetable outlook. These are the **USDA** reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., ET, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on advances in soy ink and a program to help farmers with disabilities; DeBoria Janifer reports on a computerized sow feeding system and a mechanized "sniffer" to detect contaminated grain; Pat O'Leary reports on the "Soybean Doctor" and the wild potato; Will Pemble reports on the influence of some nutrients on human behavior; and Rick Telg reports on a shrimp variety free from disease.

ACTUALITIES -- No actualities this week due to the holidays.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on international livestock judging via video and Lynn Wyvill reports on vegetable oil as diesel fuel.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. Five minutes of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., ET, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., ET, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., ET.

OFFMIKE

1993...will be a year of change, says **Max Stewart** (WIBV, Litchfield, IL). On February 1, Max will begin broadcasting his one-hour weekday morning program on the Standard Radio Network and simulcast it on CBN. He says one thing that didn't change in central Illinois during 1992 was the growing conditions. The crops went in on time, grew on schedule, and were harvested on time. Max says the only problem was finding storage space for all the grain.

NEW DUTIES...of Farm Director have been assumed by staff member **Charlie Kampa** (KBRF, Fergus Falls, MN). **Paul Weyrens** has left the station.

RETIREMENT...of **Jim Kendrick** (KWTO, Springfield, MO) has ended local farm programming at the station.

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Office of Public Affairs
Radio-TV Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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CONGRATULATIONS...to **Jeff Wheeler** (KBOA/KTMO, Kennett, MO) for the salute given to him by the Mid-Am Reporter magazine in its December 1992 issue.

CONGRATULATIONS...to our **Marci Hilt** (USDA Radio-TV). She has been appointed president of the National Association of Government Communicators. Marci is presently located in the USDA Office of Agriculture Biotechnology, helping the new organization establish a public information program.

LOOK FOR...a postcard that will be included in our weekly cassette mailing envelope dated January 5, 1993. We ask that you fill out the postage paid card and drop it in the mail to us. Your response will help us update our mailing list and keep the cassette arriving at your station every week. Please respond if you want to continue receiving the service.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division